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UNCLAS HANOI 000727

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NP/MNA, EAP/BCLTV, OES/PCI, OES/STC
DOE FOR NA-25 (HUIZENGA/TITTEMORE)
UNVIE FOR IAEA JBLAHA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AORC](#) [PTER](#) [KNNP](#) [KNNP](#) [VM](#) [IAEA](#) [ENRGY](#)

SUBJECT: IAEA - UPDATE ON VIETNAM'S RESPONSE TO OFFER OF
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN SECURING HIGH RISK RADIOACTIVE
SOURCES

REFS: A. 03 STATE 291311

[1](#)B. 03 HANOI 2268

[1](#)C. 03 STATE 238713

[1](#)1. This is an action cable. Please see Paragraphs 6 and 7 below.

[1](#)2. On January 9, 2004, Embassy EST Officer met with Dr. Dang Thanh Luong, Director, Vietnam Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority (VRPNSA) to follow-up on the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s proposal regarding Vietnam's possible participation in DOE's Radiological Threat Reduction (RTR) program.

[1](#)3. Dr. Luong was receptive to the proposal, but stated he would like to have more details on the RTR program and a work plan to present to the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), the parent agency of VRPNSA. EST Officer responded that a work plan could not be prepared without data from the Vietnamese side, and that a work plan was more appropriate after a DOE team visited Vietnam to work with VRPNSA on a technical survey. EST Officer suggested that, prior to sending out a full team to perform a survey as proposed in Reftel C, perhaps DOE could send a smaller technical team to discuss the program in more detail and answer Luong's questions. Luong agreed with this suggestion.

[1](#)4. Subsequently, EST Officer corresponded via e-mail with Craig Johnson, Office of RTR, National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), DOE to relay Dr. Luong's comments. Based on this informal exchange, EST Officer informed Dr. Luong that Mr. Johnson (and perhaps one other DOE officer) could visit Hanoi in March 2004. Mr. Johnson also provided a more detailed written description of the RTR program, which EST Officer relayed to Luong.

[1](#)5. On February 26, Dr. Luong informed EST Officer that he (Luong) had tried his best to move forward on this issue. On February 25, MOST held a meeting to review the RTR program based on information provided by EST Officer and DOE. According to Luong, MOST appreciated the proposed offer of support and welcomed a DOE delegation to visit Vietnam to introduce the program in more detail. However, Luong said that many key relevant officials would not be available in March to meet with the DOE team. Luong stated that he would contact the Embassy as soon as possible to propose a suitable time for the DOE team to visit Vietnam.

[1](#)6. Luong also revised his earlier request for information, asking for DOE to share the experiences that they have got during implementation of the RTR program in other countries. He also asked for examples of other RTR agreements/contracts, noting that DOE's visit would be more productive if MOST officials can better understand the RTR. Request that DOE attempt to respond to Luong's request.

[1](#)7. Post asks that DOE confirm its willingness to send a team (one or two technical experts) to Vietnam to provide a more in-depth explanation of the RTR program and engage VRPNSA in a dialogue on the status of Vietnam's high-risk radioactive sources. Dr. Luong is the Vietnamese point of contact for this effort. His e-mail address is dtluong@most.gov.vn. As of mid-April, the Embassy's contact point will be Econ Officer Johnathan Hilton, e-mail hiltonja@state.gov.
BURGHARDT